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head and at the foot of their rustic bed they hang their possessions, such as their bags, nets, etc., and some of their weapons. They sometimes stick four forked sticks into the ground, to a height of about a hand breadth above the surface, at the four corners of the bed, place two poles crosswise upon them and upon these, lengthwise, the necessary number of slats to make a sort of bedspring on which to spread skins and blankets. This type of bed is used particularly in the summer time in order to be cooler and to be free of insects and poisonous reptiles. The whites also customarily do the same thing, but they elevate their beds to a height of one or two meters above the ground to escape from tigers [jaguars--Translator]. I have slept on all of these types of beds and give my assurance that it is all a matter of habit -- nevertheless one can sleep much more comfortably on the ground. When the Indians break camp they burn all their huts.

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In Mataco, "hut" or "house" is said in two ways: "hauet" and "hepp" ("h" as in the German "haus" or "c" in "Florence"). Now "hepp" also means "smoke," "steam," "mist" and a kind of plant which looks like mist at a distance; "hepp" is also the name of steamship. And now, begging the reader's indulgence, is not the analogy perfect between this Mataco idiom and ours: calling the family or house "home" and a steamship "steam"? This is one more mental approximation between the Mataco man and the Aryan man.

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The spear is stood upright at the entrance to the house, and to one side are the bow and arrows, which lend a certain warlike appearance which [178] is pleasing. The houses are not constructed symmetrically, but nevertheless an attempt is made to leave, between each row of huts, a wide street-like space.

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It is a pleasure to see their fires when they are cooking. On the very top are earthenware pots which contain various roots and wild fruits, which usually need several changes of water. Among these there is a type of bean which is both good and palatable, and a root which is between a sweet potato and an Irish potato. The pots are made and fire-hardened by the Indian women, who work them with care.

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When the time for eating arrives, which, in the camp, is usually at eleven A.M. and at nightfall, fish on spits are brought out and crackle and hiss and smoke and drip in a way to make one's mouth water. On occasion a piece of meat from some animal will grace the

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satisfying the requirements of the inquisitive, if not those of the scientist (1).

1. In this translation, as is the case in dictionaries, the Spanish alphabet has been used for the reproduction of Indian words. J.P.

A nasal intonation runs through the whole of this language. There is hardly an occasion when h, j and q at the beginning of a syllable is not pronounced nasally -- the exception being when the final consonants of the preceding syllable is lost. I have come upon this phenomenon in all the South American languages with which I have had anything to do, but in none has it been so marked as among the Matacos. It may be because I know the other languages even less than I do this one. It is to this tendency that I attribute the shift from the Spanish ending ando to the Indian anno -- for example: tomando changes to tomanno -- our European languages have not escaped this change unscathed, witness the two letters m and n of our alphabet, the sonorous en and em of French, and the strangely comic way in which everybody pronounces words of endearment addressed to little children.

Another characteristic of this language is the apparent arbitrariness of its sounds. The reader will readily be able to appreciate this by just leafing through the dictionary: there seems hardly a time when the same word is pronounced in the same way, even when spoken by the same person, and this is even worse when it forms part of a sentence. It is truly enough to drive one to despair (!) and would lead to who knows what comparisons of inferiority but that, fortunately for the Matacos, there is a complete vindication and absolute proof to the contrary in that most glorious, polyphonic, word-rich (and in this sense -- that is of arbitrariness of sounds -- similar) language: English!

Chapter IV

Of words and the manner of their formation

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It is interesting and amusing to see the way in which these people form words to designate an object new to them. Observation is the supreme teacher.

[241] For example, their name for "small bell" is quíu-hút-tzét, meaning "spider belly" [no pun or connection in Spanish--Translator]; a rifle they call as our forefathers did, that is, arquebuse, that is, "fire bow" - itoj-letzej derived from itoj, "fire" and letzej, "bow"; they call "shot" "little bullets," as do the Italians, that is: c-lóquass, from c-lo meaning bullet and quass' which is a plural dimunutive ending. A piece of steel for striking fire with a flint, which they had never seen before (as was true also for all the things mentioned above) they call itoj-cquia, that is, "remedy or instrument of fire," while the flint itself they called ten-thé or stone; the wick they call itoj-léss from less meaning "sheaf," "bundle," "group," "family"; the cartridge shell they call c-lo-'hi from c-lo meaning bullet and 'hi, a particle which signifies "container" or "possession"; a mirror is tope-yaj-hi, tope-yaj meaning "image," "shadow"; a sock is ecolo-búth, which is derived from ecoló, "foot" and bhút, "covering." On the other hand shoe is to them nissót or sót, which proves that they already had knowledge of it, for they may on occasion use a kind of sandal such as that worn by the country people and called usutas. They make them from a piece of hide which serves as sole and two thongs which go between the large and second toe and are tied above the ankle. Matches [fósforos in Spanish--Translator] they call as we do ítossass, a contraction of itoj-quuass, which means "little fires"; and a match box is itoj-hi-huass, that is, "keeper of little fires."

A word which has always intrigued me and whetted my curiosity regarding its etymology is yúccúas which means tobacco, a product which was not known before in the Chaco. I think that I am not mistaken when I derive it from yu or iú, meaning "burned" and cúas, which means "to chew," "break up," "grind." As coincidence will have it, in these two activities both the use and the end result of the use of tobacco are involved. Furthermore, when an Indian says "give me some burned to chew" is he not saying pretty much what we do when we ask "give me something to smoke" [dame con que fumar in Spanish means literally "give me that with which to smoke"--Translator], that is, something to make smoke with?

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Another analogy in expression of thought -- in addition to those resulting from words in detail and from many other elements -- is to be found in the use of téi to designate eyes and face, similar to the poetic use amongst us present-day Italians of viso for face, from the Latin visus, which means "sight."

A door they call hlappé bhut or "door-opening coverer"; and in this I believe that they are more exact than we who lack a term as clear and precise as is this.

They use the same word huolêi for wool, hair [cabello in Spanish is limited to "hair on the scalp"--Translator] and "hair" [pelo, that is, hair on any part of face or body other than scalp--Translator], but precede it with a name qualifying the respective object. We do the same thing but it passes unperceived when we say cabello to signify the hair of the scalp via a syncopation which puts its etymology on the wrong track. We have a great many such misleading word shifts in our language, and the Matacos have even more [242] which makes it even more difficult to keep tabs on them.

They use the same word huolêi for the leaves of trees, thus giving one to understand that for them leaves are the hair of trees. And really they come close in this to the actual physical facts for the trees which predominate in the Chaco are of the minosa family and have leaves which are complexly and minutely subdivided, thus giving rise to the botanical term "pinnate" and "bipinnate" which are terms that justify the Mataco name which is in such close agreement with the meaning of the scientific term pinnate [from the Latin pinna meaning feather--Translator].

It is worthwhile mentioning the way in which they distinguish between the tree and its fruit -- this is done by means of an inflection; for example: the mistol tree is o'hó-yucqué, its fruit is o'hóyaque; the vinal tree is attécque, its fruit attáje; the black algarrobo tree is uossot-etzúje, its fruit uossot-etzáje, and so forth.

One notices here the constant change of u to a. We do nothing different when we call the pear tree pero and its fruit pera, the apple tree manzano and its fruit manzana, and so forth. This does not mean that there are not other ways of naming these things.

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The names used for human family relationships change with the sex of the person involved. Need this startle us who have "mother" and "father," yerno [son-in-law--Translator] and nuera [daughter-in-law--Translator] which might more practically have been yerno, yema. It is strange that all languages seem to run along the same lines, the American ones being no exception. What is more, these latter not only make a distinction between the sex of the relative who is referred to but also between that of the person speaking. For example: in Araucano the father refers to his son as fotún and to his daughter as ñahue, while the mother calls her son coñi huenthú, coñi being the general term for "child" in the mother's terminology. In Quichua the father calls his son churi and his daughter ususí, while the mother uses the term huahua.

In the Chinese language, according to my interpreter Ayao, whom I hired not long ago for two francs an hour, son is Tsaé, and daughter, Pnoé; father is Lu-tao; mother Loúmuú; brother, Ghoó-séí-lóu; and sister, Ttaí-tzt-é.

In Mataco we have the following names: father, quía; mother, ccó; son, locsé or lotsé; daughter, lectzá; brother-in-law, quayenécque; sister-in-law, ticquié; brother, lecquiilá or cjculá; sister, cjinno; uncle, uitoc; aunt, uidóje; nephew, lec-jié-los (probably a combination of son and brother); niece, cjíaió; father-in-law, quióti; mother-in-law catelá; cousin, huac-lá. I find that the terms for son-in-law and daughter-in-law are the same as those used for brother-in-law and sister-in-law, and the term for brother-in-law is also used for son-in-law, which leads me to believe that I made a mistake in my notes.

The various words used to designate the same degree of [243] relationship, according to whether it be male or female must be attributed, in my opinion, to the agglutinative system adopted in the beginning in order to determine it, but whose etymological genesis subsequent alterations have caused to become lost. The fact is clear that for a married couple a nephew, for example, must be, for one of them, the son of a sister or brother, and for the other of a brother-in-law or sister-in-law.

If we draw together into a lump the words which express these diverse relationships, we shall find that the same degree of

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family relationship, let us say, for example, a nephew, has four different names.

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An equally interesting form is that used for the demonstrative pronouns, which is similar to French usage for it is composed of the pronoun toj meaning "this one" (corresponding to the French ce) and certain particles of location such as licné for "that one over there"; letti or lani for "that one"; and others, among which are tzi for "this one." This tzi is equivalent to chi and to quii and is interesting because we come upon it again in the Araucanian language. These demonstrative pronouns also have an adjectival use, and when so employed, become separated, the toj part being prefixed to the noun and the licné, tzi etc. being suffixed, these latter can then not be declined, but the former (that is, toj) is declined. Now then, does not the same thing happen with French demonstratives? For instance with ceci and cela, which in the plural form are ceux-ci, ceux-la, and become separated when applied to some other term.

And do such similarities in form not reveal a great harmony in human intelligence, the same linguistic recourses being used to express a like order of ideas in spite of the distance which separates the different races?

The following derivation deserves special mention because it is revealing of a whole order of ideas: "No" is ka, "nothing" is kiã, "nobody" is kiái; the three words keep to the same root, and in a way which is clearer and more logical than our corresponding words. Likewise we have tde meaning "no" and that meaning "nothing," these two terms used always at the end of a word or phrase.

Tell me now, what more elegant and more compactly logical does philology have to show than the manner in which the Matacos express possessing, containing, executing, or exercising a skill? The letter h (when it has an apostrophe it is to be pronounced nasally) shows up in many words, not to say all, which express possession or capacity. Now hi and huu express that which contains, he who possesses, and he who does something; huet means "house," "the place in which." For example: "fish" is yácsét, "fish pond" is yácsétte-hi; "shoes" are hissóhéss, "seller of shoes" is nissohésse-hi, "maker of shoes" is nissohésse-huu, and "shoe shop" is nissohésse-huet. And in all analogous cases they use the same

constructions. In what way can it be said that they are behind other languages? 192 196

[244] Thus for Venus they employ the same verbal image as we and the Latins do, that is lucero ["morning star"--Translator] ijuála-hu, "mother of the day"; similarly they call the wrist "mother of the hand," tcué-huo; the abispa tic-lan [Enigmatic. The closest I can get to any logical meaning is "the tic-lan wasp," which is not helpful at all -Translator] they call "mother of the tic-lan, tic-lán-huu; and the beating of the pulse is "little heart," tdul-lecuáj.

The Mataco language may be lacking in certain particular sounds (articulations) but, on the other hand, it has a superfluity of other particular sounds (articulations). Among these latter the following stand out: quía, quié, quií, quío, quíu, and cquiá, and so forth, which together with others of similar sound are so frequent as to leave one in some doubt as to whether the language is not made up of the same syllable repeated a thousand times over in the same sense. We know already that quiá, quié etc. can change places with tzá, tzé and so forth, or with chiá, chíe, etc., or with tchía, tchié, etc. Furthermore the inversion of the constituent elements of a word is frequent, for example: "wide" is quū-tzaj-hu and also i-tzaj-quié -- it can therefore be readily understood to what extent Indian oratory can spread itself out and expand, as far as form goes, without really saying anything different. This sort of thing must be very generalized. General Mansilla in his outstanding book Una expedición a los Indios Ranqueles ["An expedition to the Ranquel Indians"--Translator] tells of having experienced this Indian fondness for repetitiveness, and I did also among the Tobas when we were harangued for half an hour and were really only told the same thing in several different ways according to Faustino the interpreter. 195

In their formation of compound words they follow the English and German usage; for example: "gloves," which are handschuhe in German, that is "hand shoes," are cqūéí-pbut among the Indians, that is "hand coverers." The same thing happens in negative sentences; example: "I do not see," is Ich sehe nicht in German and nu-ihenni-tde in Mataco, that is, "I see not," which is also precisely the manner of expression of the inhabitants of the areas surrounding Milan. 192 193

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They have general terms which represent certain abstractions such as "bird," "fish," "tree," and also particular ones with which they differentiate between particular species. What is more they even have abstract nouns, for in addition to such words as "never," "always," they have others, "fear" for instance, which they call uái, a word which also means "tremor" or "trembling." For earthquake they say hunat uái, which means "earth tremble," just as in Spanish one says "tremor of the earth." Can it be therefore that for the Matacos to fear is to tremble? Is it not in this way, taking the part for the whole, that our own abstract terms came into being in the great majority of cases? Now trembling is one, the commonest, of the many outward manifestations of fear.

I affirm that these Indians are in full possession of the human 151 intellectual faculties and ability to judge rationally, and these developed to such a degree that they can be considered our equals both in their way of reasoning and in their antiquity. The gap which exists between them and us is one which exists only in the actual world of facts and of the ideas which refer to [245] those facts -- a gap which is in no way proportional to that which exists between their intellectual faculties and ours. And this is easily understood. 000

How many years have gone by, how many were and how many are the individuals amongst us who have taken full advantage of the intellectual benefits of science, ethics and higher education generally? Very small in number are they if we take into account the historical antiquity of man and the number of men who have lived. The effects, therefore, of human psysiological traits must have changed the common heritage of humanity in the whole world during the period of its limited civilizations very little, if at all.

The fact of not having reflected on this phenomenon is the cause behind the ignorant persons's astonishment at being confronted with the advanced conditions and relative progress to be found amongst savage peoples.

The short intellectual and moral distance which separates them from us is an eloquent testimony to the hoary antiquity of man, dating back to the separation of man from his pre-human ancestors, which dwarfs into insignificance the few years which separate us from a state of savagery akin to that in which these Indians live.

These suffixes taj and quuaj and quiaj, although they are well defined particles, may nevertheless, and probably ought to, be considered as [247] inflections, for they mean nothing by themselves and furthermore it is they which are declined and not the words to which they are attached (1). And it is worth noting that

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1. I find in my notes that taj is sometimes a shortened form of oitaj, meaning "almost."

in the matter of declension they follow a rule quite contrary to the one used for the suffixes corresponding to demonstrative pronouns; the same phenomenon which is encountered in French and Italian diminutives. Taj and quiaj, of which the plurals are tass and quiáss, divide and separate as do the demonstratives, for example: "box of matches" is itoj-ʾhi-cuass, that is "fire-box-little"; a case of incorporation (2).

2. In Mataco, "matches" is translated as "little fires," itoj-huaj (euphonic h in place of c), thus following our usage even in this detail.

Finally, it seems that they habitually place an i in front of a foreign word. For example the Spanish ñato ["snub nose"--Translator] becomes iñato, in which they coincide with the Mocoví Indians. It may be just a simple euphonic exigency.

Chapter VI

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Some curious cases of onomatopoea and sound similarities.

Only very few words in this Indian language can be considered onomatopoetic, that is, imitative of the sounds they express. Which phenomenon of sound imitation is considered by some to be the origin of human language, developed later by man's intelligence.

To shout or yell is óhn; lightning is jĺepp; dumb or mute is huó-huó; cough is cacojtáss; cricket is li-tzil; parrot is quie-quié

and pelican [sic.], commonly called chajá ["Crested screamer" is W. H. Hudson's name for this large, goose sized bird--Translator] is tzá-coj, both names being derived from the bird's call. Many other words are to be found similar to these. R2 196

Following I shall set down a few Mataco words which are similar in sound to those found in Old World languages. 192

Si["yes"--Translator] in Mataco is hié, in English "yes," in German ya, and in Italian gia. "No" in Mataco is ka, in the Tuscan dialect of Italian cke, and kein ("nobody") in German. "Son" is tzé or ssé in Mataco, tzé in Bohemian, tzae tze in Chinese. Enfermo ["ill"--Translator] is iell or yell in Mataco, "ill" in English. "For" is op in Mataco, ob in Latin--it may be added that p and b are interchangeable in all languages with the greatest of ease. "Countryside" or "field" is ajlú in Mataco, agro in Latin and Italian -- let it be remembered that the Matacos use l in place of r, so that ajlú takes the place of ajrú -- "dog" is sinoj in Mataco, cynos in Greek. The next few words contain similar letters in inverted order such as in the previously mentioned "melon" - nelom: "rooster" is húh or kúh in Mataco, coq in French; "cricket" is li-tzil in Mataco, zillo in Tuscan; casa ["house"--Translator] is hauet in Mataco, haus in German, [248] "house" in English, and huasi in Quichua; con ["with"--Translator] is uuitd in Mataco, "with" in English; "and" is ut-cuei in Mataco, atque in Latin.

Furthermore, and as an additional point of interest, I must say that there is, in Chinese, a superabundance of the syllables tzié, tzié, etc., schié, schié, (sch to be pronounced as is the Catalonian x), tzá, tzé, etc., as also ttai or tai, which mean "big"; and lo, the meaning of which is still unknown to me but which I repeatedly come across at the end of words. This fact, combined with its pronunciation, which is practically identical to Mataco pronunciation, merits serious reflection on the part of the linguist, not because of any real relationship but as a phenomenon of concurrence.

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What further attracts my attention is the following: Instead of our "night" they use a word which means "earth," that is, hunát hunná, just as for "day" they make use of their word for "sun," as if they had intended to oppose one to the other. It may not be too farfetched to see in this a sort of philosophy in which the earth and the sun represent two opposite principles: darkness and light, good and evil. I, however, have not been able to perceive any such philosophy in their ideology, although it is true that something of this sort -- somewhat materialized -- is to be found in their religion, as we have had occasion to see in an earlier section of this treatise.

And is this business of using the sun, or light, to express the idea of time not an intellectual parallel or approach to the Aryan, for from the Sanscrit dyu, that is "light" [Spanish luz--Translator] came the Latin dies, the Spanish día, and the Italian di, all of which mean "day" or "day's effort."

Meanwhile, in order to say "this afternoon" they say hunná and quiá-hunná, and for "last night," hunná-tzi-nná, keeping thus to the same form and sequence followed in the order of words which we saw in "today," "tomorrow," etc.

Furthermore, their expression for "sky" is ppe-lé, which must 192 be translated as "that which is above," from ppé, "above" and lé 821 which is a contraction of lél-lé or c-lel-lé, a patronimic word which is used to express the concept of origin, provenience, father-land, etc.

It is said that savages have no abstract ideas, but I ask, is the 192 idea of "always" or "never" abstract or not? Without waiting for an 196 answer I say that these Indians in question have the word inne-mid which expresses "never," and c-lam-mej for "always," which they derive, respectively, from innem -- "more" (Italian mai, Latin umquam) and the negative d; and from j-lam, meaning "same" plus the postposition ej.

It may be objected these are expressions made up of words which separately mean something more limited, which is valid as far as the objection goes. The French, let it be remembered [267] say toujours, "all the days," with the meaning of "always" and thus express an idea which is indefinite, or rather infinite, by means of a word which of itself has a limited meaning as is the case with "day." The fact of the matter is that a given abstraction is not

limited to the words used to convey it but hinges rather on the intention behind it. If this were not so what could one say in defense of the English word "always"?

While we are on this subject let me mention that the particles naje and nenná -- the latter sometimes missing its first syllable, sometimes its last and shifting from i to e [sic] -- are used to make two verb tenses. The first, that is naje, being employed for the remote past or preterite and the other for the past perfect. For example: "to return" is tapil; "he returned" is tapil láje; "he has returned" is tapil-lé (the second l in both cases is the same as n, as was explained above in the treatment of icuála-el-láje).

In place of "midday" or "noon" they say icuála icni, which, as far as I can make out means "high sun" or "up above sun"; and in order to convey the idea of "midnight" they say hunnat-quiú-nej, which I take to mean "low earth" or "underneath earth." For "it is early" they say inataj, and for "it is late," hunáj.

They have a syllable, tde, or dthé, or ntdé, which is the basic element for a great number of adverbs of place and of time. For example: "why?" is atdyécque; "where?" is tdené; "whence?" is dtel che; "how?" is atde-tzó; "how much?" is tde-hoté; "when?" is tdé-naj-hote. Hoté alone means "as," and naj expresses the further meaning that the question refers to a somewhat remote period in the past. Let it be noted that wherever a precedes it usually refers to "thou," since the question is asked of a second person. This goes to show how important it is to know the circumstances of time (tense) and person to which the questions refer, when writing the answers.

I am afraid that I shall bore the reader with this mass of data on the Mataco language, and yet I do not know, for the life of me how to keep from telling that little which I have been able to learn of it and gather in the limited free time allowed me by my professional work and which usually comes only in the very late hours of the night. If I make digressions to keep the reader from becoming tired I fear that I shall write too lengthily, and if I make no digressions and write a straight report I fear to be too dry and boring. . . . Certainly I know not which way to turn. Who will suggest some bright idea which will afford escape from this slough? No one?